

Why, why, why...

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Editor's Note - We have known Laura for over 10 years as a computer systems integration business owner, entrepreneur, and prolific writer.

If you are the parent of a five year old you probably feel that **"Why"** is the worst word in the English language. If you are feeling depressed you might use that word to say *"why me?"* If you are an entrepreneur you love that word because it lets you ask the questions, *"Why do we have to do it that way? What can't we do it differently and get a different result?"* Depending on your perspective, the word evokes very different emotions.

I drove my parents crazy from an early age because I always wanted to know why something was the way it was. *"Why do we have to do it that way? Why is the sky blue? Why is it called a chair? Why can't I do that?"* You get the drift. When they didn't have the answer, they made me research it and then tell them what I had found out. This ended up being great training for me and enveloped my lifelong love of reading, research, learning and questioning.

I still ask my Mom lots of questions but my husband now bears the brunt of me asking him why all the time. Thankfully he often has really great answers that make total sense. I still want to figure out a different way of doing something, but at least he gives me good answers to work from. For some people, asking questions is really difficult. They feel by questioning someone, they are invalidating that person's knowledge and experience. How often have you or someone you known been unwilling to question what your doctor is telling you? How about your boss? I feel it is important to ask question if you don't know why. Remember to do it with respect and tact though and you will get a positive response versus a defensive one.

Why is questioning so important? Questioning opens you up to new possibilities. Good questions move you from your comfort zone into a new perspective. From there, you can chart a new path, redesign your business, create a new product, increase your bottom line, improve your marriage or even improve your mood.

Asking, "Why?" of yourself, others and situations shifts your brain into new pathways it would not typically go down in response to something or someone. I am not advocating acting like a five year old but I do suggest you have an open mind like a five year old does, unless it is about brussels sprouts and then good luck with that and any five year old. Anytime you find yourself responding on autopilot or if you feel like you keep getting the same result, that you don't want, ask yourself a few questions. Why am I doing this? Why do I want to do this? What can I do to change the outcome ? Yes, why questions often lead to what, how, when and where questions.

When my first husband proposed to me I asked myself, "Do I want to marry him?" This was a really great question, or so I thought, since we were not dating when he proposed to me. We had broken up and I was dating other people when he proposed. The only question I had in my head was, "do I want to marry him?" I said yes and we got divorced within two years.

I realized that if I had asked myself, "Why do I want to get married?", before I asked myself the other question the result would have been different. The response to why do I want to be married was an eye-opening one. I realized I wanted to be married because it was the next logical step. I had a successful job, my own home, respect of my peers and what seemed like a bright future. What I didn't have yet was a husband. I needed to check that box because I needed that to complete the success picture as I saw it back then.

It was a very freeing moment for me. All my preconceived notions of what success meant to me dropped away and created an opening for me to start my own business, date only who I really wanted to date versus someone I thought I should date and I could be ok being single and happy.

I had several relationships after the divorce but I always asked myself the why question whenever we started getting serious and I remained single until I met my current husband. Now the answer became, I want to get married because I want to spend the rest of my life with him. I love him and want him in my life everyday versus I want to be married to be married. Very different answer. Very different marriage.

Are you asking yourself, "Why?" enough or are you just letting your existing ideas shape your future. Stop right now and think about a project you are working on at work or home. Ask yourself, "Why you are doing it and does it move you forward towards your goals you have for your future. Then ask yourself, "Why do I have those goals? Are they mine or someone else's for me?" If they are someone else's, decide what you really want for your life and craft new goals.

Keep questioning and share with me how asking, "Why?" shifted your perspective and created something wonderful or perhaps it showed you something not so wonderful. Oh yeah, if your five year old keeps asking why, send them to Google or the library and watch what happens!

Laura Steward Atchison is a creative entrepreneur and writer who brings wit and wisdom to her fans. Her current endeavor is founding *Wisdom Learned, LLC*. Ms. Atchison gave birth to the idea of a new company that focuses on educating other business leaders through experience and lessons learned from the trenches. Her current book in process is entitled **"What Would a Wise Woman Do? Questions I Should Have Asked Along the Way"**. Link to www.lauraatchison.com for lots more.